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Debian Linux: Change Hostname / Computer Name Permanently

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How do I change the hostname of a Debian Linux system permanently using the command line tools?

You can use the hostname command to display or set the Debian Linux system's host name. In this tutorial, **you will learn how to change your hostname on Debian Linux**.

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How To change your hostname on Debian server

Steps to change your hostname on Debian Linux:

1. Login to your server: `ssh user@server-name`
2. Become a root user: `sudo -s` or `su -`
3. Edit the file /etc/hostname: `vi /etc/hostname`
4. Edit the file /etc/hosts: `vi /etc/hosts`
5. Run command: `/etc/init.d/hostname.sh start`

Let us see steps in details to change a system's hostname i.e. rename a computer/server name when using a Debian Linux based system.

Find your current computer name

Type the following command:

```
$ hostname
```

Sample outputs:

```
server1
```

Debian change hostname

Let us change your computer name on Debian. For example, change hostname to server2, enter:

```
$ hostname server2
$ hostname
```

Sample outputs:

```
server2
```

How Do I Change Hostname Permanently?

Edit the file /etc/hostname, enter:

```
# vi /etc/hostname
```

Delete the existing name and replace it with a new name:

```
server2
```

Save and close the file. You may also need to edit the /etc/hosts file, enter:

```
# vi /etc/hosts
```

Find all references to server1 and replace with server2:

```
127.0.0.1       localhost
127.0.1.1       server2

# The following lines are desirable for IPv6 capable hosts
::1     ip6-localhost ip6-loopback
fe00::0 ip6-localnet
ff00::0 ip6-mcastprefix
ff02::1 ip6-allnodes
ff02::2 ip6-allrouters
```

Save and close the file. Please note that the host name is usually set once at system startup in /etc/init.d/hostname.sh (normally by reading the contents of a file which contains the host name, e.g. /etc/hostname). Just type the following command to apply new changes without rebooting the server:

```
# /etc/init.d/hostname.sh start
```

OR

```
# invoke-rc.d hostname.sh start
```

A note about setting machine name when using systemd

With systemd it is possible to use a single command as follows:

```
# hostnamectl set-hostname machine-name-here
# hostnamectl set-hostname server2
```

This entry is **2** of **17** in the **Linux/Unix Set hostname Tutorial** series. Keep reading the rest of the series:

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The author is the creator of nixCraft and a seasoned sysadmin, DevOps engineer, and a trainer for the Linux operating system/Unix shell scripting. Get the **latest tutorials on SysAdmin, Linux/Unix and open source topics via RSS/XML feed** or weekly email newsletter.

5 comment

arun January 6, 2012 at 12:43 am

on RedHat you need to update
/etc/sysconfig/network

abouthack January 17, 2012 at 12:49 pm

got it at last

rsm June 26, 2013 at 11:21 am

Very usefull. Thanks!

eduard July 15, 2016 at 2:14 pm

I kept having problems after the otherwise excellent instructions: my hostname did not change (It insisted on naming my machine “(none)”)
Turned out the name was not acceptable. I wanted to use RB_1 (being the first rasperry in my house), and apparently I can’t use an underscore. Named it just RB and then followed your instructions.

Dogukan May 31, 2017 at 7:19 pm

Works on debian 9; Thank you very much;

Still, have a question? Get help on our forum!

Tagged as: /etc/HOSTNAME, /etc/hosts, /etc/init.d/hostname.sh start, hostname command, Easy

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